Grace Weekly Email Update

February 12, 2025

Message from Pastor Jeff

Our Monday night worship service on February 24 is going to be a night of worship for the whole church. Instead of the usual order of service, we are going to spend the evening worshiping and praying for sensitivity to the Holy Spirit for us as individuals and as a church. We are also going to pray for the global church and for Gather 25. Our last night of worship and prayer was amazing and I have been looking forward to this night. Come join us at 6pm on February 24.

Men of Grace: Mark Lewis is the Executive Director of For King and Kingdom Ministries and is going to be at Grace on Thursday night, February 20, speaking about what it looks like to live as kingdom men in our generation. Several of our guys have been through the For King and Kingdom retreat and have been super blessed by this ministry. Sign up **HERE**.

I look forward to worshiping with you this weekend and learning more about The Good Life!

Your brother in Christ,

Jeff

WORSHIP—February 16 & 17

Traditional (8:30am Sunday)
Hymns: Immortal Invisible, God Only Wise; Be Thou My Vision

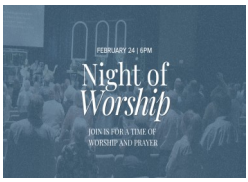
Modern (9:30 & 11:00am Sunday) (6pm Monday)
Songs: We Praise You; Stand In Your Love
Same God; No Other Love

Live Stream @ 9:30am Sunday: Facebook & YouTube

Grace Community Church
4001 Brooken Hill Dr., Fort Smith, AR 72908
479.646.1177 contact@gracefs.com
Office Hours: 9-5 Monday-Thursday www.gracefs.com

Grace Community Church exists for the glory of God,
to make visible the kingdom of God, and
to declare the grace of God to all the world.

WORSHIP



Monday, February 24 at 6pm
Join us for a night of worship and prayer! All are welcome as we sing and prepare for Gather 25!

Gather 25
Friday, February 28 @ 6:30 pm thru Saturday, March 1 @ 8:30 pm

In Matthew 28, Jesus commanded us to "go and make disciples of all nations." Now, for the first time in history, technology has connected the Global Church in ways that were never before possible. This is an unprecedented moment to invite Christians to gather together for the sake of the gospel and the Great Commission.

For 25 hours, we'll be led by international leaders sharing the stories of what God is doing on each continent. Through captivating storytelling, earnest worship, and powerful prayer, we hope that everyone who attends will leave with a renewed desire to take the gospel to their families, schools, homes, workplaces, and communities.

The goal of Gather 25 is to mobilize the 2.5 billion Christians on Earth to participate in the mission of God and to "go and make disciples" of the 5.5 billion people who are not yet believers.

You're invited to be apart of this historic moment for the global church! Childcare will be provided on February 28 from 6:30-8:30pm and March 1, 6:30- 8:30pm.

For more info about Gather 25 click **HERE**.

Ash Wednesday Service
Wed., March 5, noon & 6pm

Join us as we begin the season of Lent with an Ash Wednesday service at noon and 6:00pm. This is a short service where we commit to using the 40 days of Lent as preparation to grow deeper in our walk with Christ. We spend a few moments in worship, have ashes placed on our foreheads as a sign of our mortality and dependence upon God for life, and we spend time in prayer.

What is Lent? Lent is a season of 40 days that begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts for 40 days. (The Sundays of Lent are not part of the 40 days of Lent and so remain "little Easters"). Lent is a time to prepare for Easter. It is a necessary prelude. The death and resurrection of Christ are true whether or not you prepare for Easter. However, without your heart and life being ready, you may not experience the depth and power of Christ's death and resurrection. Lent is not about being miserable or sad, but about preparing to celebrate the greatest news the world has ever received. Fasting and giving up something can be part of Lenten disciplines, but so can taking on some things. Click **HERE** for a few suggestions.

KIDS MINISTRY (Infants—5th GRADERS)

Contact **Christine** for Children's Ministry.
Kids Page on Grace Website—Click **HERE**.

This Month's Biblical Theme Is: Jesus Knows Us

The message that God knows us is reinforced over and over again in the Bible. Jesus told a group of His followers not to worry because God knows what they need. Jesus knew the heart of the woman who anointed His feet with oil and loved her deeply despite her sin. Knowing Peter's fear when they were walking on water together, Jesus rescued him. Jesus wanted His disciples to know Him and see Him as their Rescuer just like God wants us to know Him.

Kids Summer 2025 Camp at Siloam Spring
July 21, 8am—July 25, 5pm
(3rd-5th Grades)
Signups Begin

Kids Camp sign ups have officially begun for Summer 2025. Kids who have completed 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade as of May 2025 are eligible. Please click the link for more information or to sign up, spots are limited! This is a great opportunity for children to be with other believers their age and enjoy fellowship and fun. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact **Christine.** To register, click **HERE**.

TRAIL LIFE USA (K-12th grade boys)

Contact **JD** for Trail Life.
Troop 316, First 3 Mondays of Each Month (Feb.3,10,17)
6:15-7:30pm, StuMin

Trail Life USA is a Church-Based, Christ-Centered, Boy-Focused mentoring an discipleship ministry that speaks to the heart of a boy. Set in the context of outdoor adventure, boys are engaged in a Troop setting by male mentors where they are challenged to grow in character, understand their purpose, serve their community, and develop practical leadership skills to carry out the mission for which they were created.

DASH & FM

(6-8th grades) & (9-12th grades)
Contact **Dana** For DASH and FM
Dash/FM Page on Grace Website—Click **HERE**

Weekly Gatherings: Wednesdays, 6:00pm!
Join us for food, fun, and fellowship!

Getting Ready for Senior Sunday, May 4!
We will celebrate in the Student Ministry Building with a luncheon after the 11:00 worship service. Invite friends and family to celebrate. Be sure to sign up for the luncheon **HERE** as well as provide Senior information for the "Senior Brochure."

Parents: Important…. Please send three pics to Dana no later than Sunday, March 16. Two pictures of the senior when he/she was younger and one senior picture. Email these to **Dana**.

Summer Camp—Few Spots Left
6th –12th Grade
Revised

We only have a few spots still available. Must **register** ASAP. First and second deposits will be due...$200 total. If you need financial assistance for camp, please contact **Dana**.

Scholarship Donations Appreciated—If you would like to help a student(s) go to camp this year, we would greatly appreciate full or partial scholarships. Donations can be made by clicking **HERE** (instructions in second paragraph of "Youth Summer Camp 2nd Installment" page)

All confirmands, family and friends
are invited to join us to celebrate this journey.
What a journey these kids have already been on!
What a journey they have JUST BEGUN!!

Message to Our Confirmation Parents….
Please click on this **link** to sign up for the celebration luncheon following worship services on March 9th.

CONNECT/EVENTS

Galentines Bunco Night
Saturday, February 15
6-9pm, Activity Center

Ladies, it's time to grab your best gals for a fun night of Bunco! Whether you're a Bunco pro or a first-timer, this is the perfect opportunity to relax and meet other women within the church. Bring an unwrapped gift that is $10 or less. We'd love to have you join us, **sign-up today**!

Men's Night at Grace
Thursday, February 20, 6-7:30pm
Student Ministry Building

Who is a "Kingdom Man"? The biblical definition of a man is one who has learned to operate under the authority of Jesus Christ while carrying out responsible and legitimate leadership within the sphere of influence that God has placed him. When a man follows the principles of biblical manhood, those around him benefit from his leadership and care.

At this month's "Men's Night at Grace" we will have guest speaker, Mark Lewis, Executive Director of For King and Kingdom Ministries. He will speak on what it looks like to live as a "Kingdom Man" in our generation. Invite friends and come enjoy a night of food and fellowship.

Cost is $10. Please sign up **HERE**.

CONNECT/EVENTS

Youth Summer Camp Lunch Fundraiser
Sunday, March 16, 10:30am—12:30pm
Enjoy a delicious pasta lunch while supporting our youth going to summer camp. Your meal will help send kids to church camp, where they'll grow in faith, make lasting friendships, and experience unforgettable adventures. You can eat your lunch in the Stu-Min with other church members or take it to-go! Click **HERE** to pre-order your meal! (Chicken Bacon Ranch Pasta) $10/plate

For King and Kingdom – Men's Retreat
Wednesday-Sunday, April 9-13
Burning Bush Lodge, Wrightsville, AR
Cost: $300
A "For King and Kingdom" retreat experience is designed to inspire, unite, and free men to pursue their Kingdom destiny in a community of like-minded men. We grow in our faith by knowing God, knowing self and knowing others on a deep and personal level, this retreat experience is designed to do that. Too often, men in the church need something to arouse their hearts, to awaken a sleeping warrior for the King and his Kingdom mission. The church of Jesus needs men of strength and courage who are willing to surrender their lives to King Jesus and His Kingdom!

Filling out this form does not commit you to the retreat. It is for men who are interested in learning more about the retreat. JD Cunny will contract you with more details.
Scholarships/payment arrangements are available. Space is limited.

CONNECT—On Going Groups

Upper Room Daily Devotional Discussion Group
1st & 3rd Wednesdays
1-2pm, Activity Center
Using the Upper Room Daily Devotional Guide, ladies discuss the daily reading and the Bible verses as a launching pad for in-depth discussions to include sharing personal experiences. Class is led by Sherry Grimm.

By Hook, Needle & Craft Women's Group
1st & 3rd Thursdays
1pm, Activity Center
Join a group of women who love crafts and visiting with each other. Crafts include knitting, crewel, needlepoint, cross-stitch and any other craft you wish to do. If you are gifted with these talents or want to learn, join these ladies in this wonderful ministry. On the few occasions when the first day of the month falls on a Thursday, meetings will be on 2nd & 4th Thursdays. Class is led by Mary Carter.

Men's Lunch Huddle
Thursday, February 6, 12pm
The Egg of Fort Smith
3801 Planters Rd.
This is a great way to connect with other men at Grace. Invite a friend or coworker. (First Thursday of each month)

Moms Growing in Grace
(2nd Tues each month—Sept-May)
Remaining Dates:
Mar 11, Apr 8, May 13
6-7:30pm, Kids Church Classroom
Moms Growing with Grace is a group where mothers can come together. Whether you are raising children now, are pregnant , are fostering, or have grown children, all are welcome. We come together each month to discuss topics that matter to us and use our faith and experiences to encourage each other. Our study this session will be "Reclaiming Motherhood: Embracing the Untamed, Beauty, Fun, Passion & Vitality of Motherhood" Questions, contact Jessica Michael 479-322-2164 or Ariana Gallamore 417-274-4671 (free childcare provided)

SERVE

Contact Kathleen for more information.

Serve Ministries Lunch & Learn Roundtable
March 2, 12:15pm, Activity Center

From financial giving to delivering much needed supplies, Grace actively works at supporting our many Community Partners each month. One of the most challenging things I am tasked with is getting the word out about the endless opportunities we have to love and serve people right here in the River Valley. It is our hope that these Roundtable sessions will be an exciting and new way to learn what our Serve Ministries at Grace is all about. I hope you will join us for lunch on Sunday, March 2. Please check out our **website for more details and for sign up information**. As always, you can also contact **Kathleen**.

Care Portal Training/Informational Lunch
March 16, noon, Activity Center

Simply put, the Care Portal is a technological system that connects people who can help with people who need help...right now, in real time. Join us for this training and informational lunch. Please check out more **details on our website along with sign up information**. Contact **Kathleen**.

Human Trafficking Awareness

What can you do about human trafficking? Below are a few resources and information to get you started. The most important way to counteract human trafficking is to raise awareness for those being targeted and to know how traffickers engage with those at risk. We encourage you to begin the journey of educating yourself and those around you by checking out our **Human Trafficking Guide** and subscribing to the **EDOH Safe House Ministry Newsletter**.

For more information about the ministries of Eight Days of Hope, contact **Kathleen**.

NEW!

The CALL Monthly Newsletter

Be sure to read the second attachment in today's newsletter email. Find out what has been happening at the call, what is coming up soon; ways to volunteer; items needed for the facility's kitchen used for family visits and much more.

MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY

Contact Rick for more information.

Message from Kerry Underwood, MS, LPC, LMFT

Hi Church Family!

My name is Kerry Underwood and I am a Licensed Professional Counselor/Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist here in Fort Smith. In the month of February, the Mental Health Team's focus is on Depression. Depression (and mental health in general) has been a misunderstood topic within the worldwide Church and it's our mission to help speak truth and love over each of these topics every month.

I have been a licensed clinician for 15 years, and some of the most heartbreaking moments that I have encountered is wounding and hurt that someone has experienced at the hands of the church (a fellow Christian, a pastor, etc). To hear the myths and lies that Christians believe about depression (or any other mental health struggle), and the shame that can be felt surrounding this topic is sometimes overwhelming. I'm so sorry if you've experienced this yourself.

As I've interacted with more and more people on this topic over the years, I've noticed that there are a few severely false ideas about depression that continue to be perpetuated among believers. First and foremost is the false notion that you must be "weak" if you struggle with depression, as though your struggle is a reflection of your strength. Second, and one that I hear most often, is that a struggle with depression signifies a lack of faith or a problem in your walk with the Lord. Third, a false statement that tends to circulate among Christians is that the only thing you need to get through the struggle is prayer and God's Word. Church, these statements could not be farther from the truth and cause so much damage inside people who are struggling. If you have ever heard any of the false statements above, here's what I really need you to understand:

1) Your struggle is not a reflection of your strength. In fact, those that struggle with depression are typically the strongest people I have encountered. If life is a journey, those dealing with depression are carrying around an extra 50 pounds of burden on their back, and yet, still taking the same steps as everyone else. Steps that reflect faithfulness. Steps that reflect hope, and steps that reflect remarkable and courageous strength.

2) Your struggle is not a reflection of your faith. Not only is it false to believe that struggling with depression is a reflection of your faith, but it is the antithesis of the entire message of Christ. As believers, we are never promised a pain-free, disease-free, struggle-free life. In fact, Jesus reminds us that in this world we will struggle (John 16:33). But in our struggle, we're promised a Savior, a Comforter, and a Friend. Depression has nothing to do with lack of faith; in fact, the struggle can be the catalyst for even deeper faith. Because some days, in the hardest moments, faith is the only thing to hold on to. Your struggle is not a reflection of your faith. In fact, if God is near to the broken-hearted, you are closer to God in this moment, then ever before. Hold on to that truth. And continue to cling to Him no matter what anyone else tells you.

3) You can do something with the struggle. I've learned that faith and action go hand in hand. When we have faith, we move. When Jesus healed the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, He told him to "get up…and walk" (John 5:8). Walking while paralyzed doesn't seem possible—just as impossible as it often seems to be able to "live" while struggling with depression. But Jesus reaches out His hand and tells us to get up and walk. Take the next step. Take action. And trust God to give you the strength you need to take that next step. Taking action in this area of our lives means understanding the role that community, counseling, and at times, medication plays in helping bring relief to our struggles. They're the primary means of taking initiative toward mental health, and they're effective!

My deepest prayer is that, as a body of believers, our attitudes would shift and our hearts would change as we face this important issue—that we would create an environment where we embrace and encourage those who are struggling with depression, rather than pushing them away. If you are struggling with depression and don't know where to start, reach out to any of the Mental Health Team or staff of Grace and we will be profoundly happy to point you in the right direction!

In Him,

Kerry

OTHER

Grace Place Preschool Summer and 2025-2026 Enrollment Begins February 10 For Grace Community Church Families

On Monday, February 10, Grace Place will begin enrolling new kids from Grace Community Church families for Summer 2025 and the 25-26 school year.

Summer age bracket is: 8 weeks - 5th grade

25/26 School Year age bracket is: 8 weeks - PreK

To receive an enrollment package, please stop by the Grace Place Office between 7am-5:30pm Monday thru Friday. Packets must be turned in at the Preschool not the church office. This will allow the Preschool to tell the family if there is an open spot or if the family will go on the waitlist.

For questions or more information please contact Grace Place Preschool Director Natalie Cole or Assistant Director Brandie Haynes at (479)646-6503.

Receiving Text Messages from Grace

If you are not receiving text messages from Grace and you want to, be sure to send a text message to this #: **87447** and type in the message the word **START**. Once this is completed, you will receive a message back that says you are enrolled to receive these messages.

As winter approaching, this is the best way for us to notify the church whether services/events are delayed or cancelled. Also, messages are sent to small/study groups through this feature. Don't miss out on important messages/reminders that are sent through text messaging.

GIVING

Automatic Giving to Moving Forward Fund Needs Revising

If you have automatic checks or PayPal recurring payments still being sent to the church marked for "Moving Forward Fund," we ask that you make corrections on your end. As Pastor Jeff shared in his email message to the church on October 18, we have paid off our building loan! If you would like to re-direct your giving to other needs, here are some suggestion Pastor Jeff gave:

Facilities Maintenance Fund
Mission Fund
Seminary Scholarship Fund
Gracie Van Fund
Or any other area of the church you desire to support

Contact Jeannette if you have any questions.

PRAYER

If you have prayer needs, please submit request HERE.

Community & World
Unsaved
United States
Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Gaza
All Military
Foster and Adoptive Parents
Victims of Violence
Weather Event Victims
Eight Days of Hope Ministry
Those who are sick
Those struggling w/mental illness & addictions
Walker & Jessica Lowe (YWAM Missionaries)

Grace Families
Rowe Carter
Ron Adams
Peggy Ross
Carol Hall
Barbara Braswell
Brandon Childers
Sarah Phillips
Kevin Robertson
Bob Cochenour
Ken Harvey
Chuck Goux
Jim Sharp
Carla Hilliard
Becky Basinger
Jeremy Strunk

Grace Friends
Terry Porter (former Grace member)
Melanie Woody (Teacher in Greenwood)
Sid Cawter (Misty Cunny's step dad)
Don (SIL of Peggy/Roger Ross)
Beth Ann Simpson (Granddaughter of Terri/Bill Hewitt)
Don Hutchings

Cancer Fighters—Grace Family
Nora Lowe
Tom Kaufenberg

Sympathies
Debra (Girlinghouse) and Tom Newman
(death of Debra's sister Cathy Robertson McNeal)